

The Last Noble

by iDeltaVelocity

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Summary: Jun survives the glassing of Reach, and is now the only survivor of Noble Team. While alone, he regroups with a mysterious Spartan-III who recruits him into ONI special operations.

The Last Noble

Reach.

It used to be known as the "crown jewel" of humanity; what the UNSC and ONI held so near and dear for all these years. Now all that remains of the well-defended UNSC strong-arm is nothing more than a barren wasteland—its soil, and every living thing left on the planet, turned to glass. The UNSC had lost its initiative in an already losing war for survival.

To some, if the Covenant had found Reach, it would only be a matter of time before they find Earth.

And if they found Earth, it would mean the end of the war—|

* * *

><p>Planet Reach

_September 3, 2552 03:00 Hours _

Jun-A226, known by his callsign as Noble Three, ventured aimlessly through the titanium mines underneath ONI CASTLE Base. The last he saw of his team was before he was ordered to escort Doctor Catherine Hasley from the already destroyed Sword Base to here, a place they had to destroy in order to prevent the Covenant from getting their hands on valuable information—primarily information that could lead them to Earth. While successful in destroying the base and fleeing Covenant squads, Jun had been separated from Dr. Hasley and the five SPARTAN-II Commandos they regrouped with. Since then, he had been

trapped within these mines, unable to find himself a way out.

Sitting against the wall, Jun pondered on what to do next. He'd eaten through most of his emergency rations. Staying down here any longer would mean the end for him. But Noble Three was always one to improvise. He would find a way out somehow.

All around him, titanium began to break free from the walls as a sudden rumbling shook the caves. He figured the Covenant must still be glassing some parts of the planet—or at the very least trying to break through the ground to his position. They would send a party to search for something of value to their religion—or to hunt down any human survivors. If that were the case, Jun would go down fighting, just like the rest of his team.

Hours passed when the rumbling stopped; Jun had already been asleep by then, resting up so that he could have enough energy to find a way out when he woke up. He held his System 99 Anti-Material Sniper Rifle close to him, so he could quickly use when the time arose.

Jun eventually woke to the sound of footsteps echoing off the cave walls. Could it have been a human? Or was a Covenant? He wasn't too sure. Nevertheless, he took a knee and aimed his rifle at the source of the disturbance.

"Who's there?"

The footsteps stopped. Jun activated his night vision to find that he wasn't a Covenant soldier, but instead a human soldier—a Spartan. The Spartan's armour was violet with blue lining, and they had a helmet that looked like a CQC mixed with a Military Police.

The Spartan slowly tread forward, hands held in the air. "Don't shoot. I'm not an alien."

"Obviously," replied Jun, lowering his aim.

The Spartan lowered his hands in turn. "I'm Spartan-A325—Kevin; Warrant Officer; callsign 'Nighthawk'. I take it you must be Jun-A226; same rank as me; callsign 'Noble Three'."

"How do you know who I am?" Jun's voice was full of suspicion, despite talking with a human, particular another Spartan.

Kevin shrugged. "Let's just say 'some people' told me about you. So, how long have you been down here?"

"What's it matter?"

"Because I have orders to get any survivors off Reach. I've been scouring this planet for days doing it. Not many people survived the glassing. I figured after CASTLE Base was reported destroyed, someone must've escaped underground to avoid the explosion. The rest of the UNSC forces in this system are retreating back to Earth. After the Covenant found Reach, ONI figured it would only be a matter of time before—"

"Wait," Jun interrupted. "You're an ONI operative?"

Kevin-A325 shrugged again, this time nonchalantly, as if he expected Jun to ask that one question. "I've been working with them for a decade, so I guess you could say that."

Jun shook the thought off, not wanting to venture further into the subject. "Whatever. Besides, I wasn't the only one down here, you know."

"Oh, I know," replied Kevin. "You were escorting Doctor Catherine Hasley from Sword Base in Eposz. She reported that she and you met up with five Spartan-IIs before she was forced to initiate Operation: WHITE GLOVE. Trust me, Noble Three; I know a lot more than you could ever find out about."

Kevin turned to leave, before Jun stopped him. "Wait. How did you get in here?"

"You mean you don't know?" Kevin responded sarcastically.

"Of course I don't." Jun's voice had a bit of a growl in it. Kevin could sense it. "Nearly everywhere I went, the halls are either blocked off or they lead me in a never-ending circle. How did you get in?"

"There's an emergency ventral hatch back where I came from. While the titanium mines were being constructed, technicians thought it would be a good idea to make one if a cave-in like this were to happen. We could use that to get to the surface."

"Well wait are we waiting for?"

"The Scarabs outside to leave," Kevin replied. "It was part of the reason I hid in here. There's two of those mega-weapons taking place outside the facility. They're blasting everything in sight. Figured they wanted to make sure this planet was devoid of anything they deemed to be 'contaminated by us human filth' or some shit like that. They should be gone by now."

Jun snickered. "You're a Spartan. You could've taken on those Scarabs"but instead you decide to go into hiding."

"Even a Spartan needs to know his limitations. One Spartan couldn't take on an entire Scarab without at least an ODST Battalion backing him up. It'd be downright suicide."

Once again, Jun snickered. "Well, I know one Spartan who could. Heard stories about how he was able to survive an entire Covenant regiment in less than an hour."

"Really?" Kevin didn't show it, but he was baffled. Was there actually a Spartan who could accomplish such feats? Of course from looking at ONI records, there is one Spartan and he was pronounced missing along with the Pillar of Autumn. "Whatever. We should go. I have no idea how long these caves can hold before they start collapsing entirely."

"After you" Jun motioned for Kevin to lead the way.

The two Spartan-IIIs made their way through the caverns. The path that Kevin had taken before he met up with Jun was dark, so the two

had to turn on their night vision to find their way through. More titanium began to fall to the ground, as well as some rocks. Judging by Kevin, it would not be too long before the caverns would begin to collapse around them.

Eventually they arrived at a medium-sized titanium door. Kevin pulled a hatch on it, and the door opened up, revealing some stairs that led upward towards another door at the top. They walked through and found themselves outside. The former blue sky had turned charcoal, and the earth beneath them was covered with soot and ash that fluttered in the air. It all went for miles. Jun had never seen anything like it. It was like looking into a deep dark abyss.

"Looks like something out of a nuclear war," he stated in disbelief at what his eyes were currently showing him.

"Orbital plasma bombardment is known to have the same effects as a nuclear detonation, probably even ten times worse. Just be glad you got your helmet on. Don't want you to suffocate out here," said Kevin.

"So where do we go now?"

Kevin pointed at a mountain. "ODST squad is waiting for me with a Pelican just past that mountain. We arrived in an ONI stealth ship to avoid Covenant radars, but I don't know how long it can stay out there. We better keep moving if we want to make it."

The Spartans started for the mountain. Kevin grabbed his MA37 Assault Rifle from off his back as he and Jun cautiously made their way through the barren wasteland. Mountains began to collapse far off the horizon, bellowing large amounts of dust from underneath. But there was something Jun could not shake off, something strange: it was too quiet.

"I got a bad feeling about this," said Jun.

"How so?" asked Kevin.

"I don't know. You said there were Scarabs out here. They shouldn't have gotten far with an escort following. Do you think they're hiding?"

"They could be waiting for us. Waiting to ambush our extraction if they have the chance at it," replied Kevin, although he did not seem too worried.

Eventually, his COM crackled to life: "_Sierra-325, come in over."

—

"I read you—| What is it?"

"_We've set up a defensive perimeter around the LZ. Some of our scouts spotted a large Covenant patrol heading towards our position."_

"Stay put, I'm on my way." He turned to Jun. "We're running out of time. Covenant are converging on the LZ. If we don't hurry, we'll lose our only ride off this rock."

"Then what're we waiting here for? Let's go!"

Jun and Kevin, weapons cocked and locked, ventured out into the wasteland, prepped and ready for anything that might jump out at them. With the LZ under threat of attack, it was 'do or die' time for the Spartans.

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